

Our strengths, our stories: Perspectives of positive sexual relationships from Aboriginal young people in western Sydney

Authors: to be determined. Authors will be peer interviewers from the study 'Fostering the sexual well-being of Aboriginal young people by building on social, cultural and personal strengths and resources'

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Background. It is rare for Aboriginal young people to present research by and about themselves and told in their own voices, and this is especially the case when it comes to sexual health. This poster presentation was co-designed and co-written by a peer research team of Aboriginal young people from western Sydney during a one-day co-design workshop with UNSW researchers. We present their views about what counts as a positive sexual relationship, using qualitative data collected from 52 Aboriginal young people (including 14 peer researchers and 37 Aboriginal young people from their friendship and family groups). **Methods.** This study utilised the peer-interview method to generate original data. Immediately prior to conducting the interviews, the research team delivered four days of research training to the peer researchers to ensure they were confident and competent to conduct interviews with young people in their networks aged 16-24 years. 37 interviews took place with friends, siblings and cousins who were of the same gender. Interviews were between 5-30 minutes and were audio-recorded. Participants were paid \$50 for their time. **Results.** Among both young men and women, positive relationships were those that included love and emotional connection, where there was mutual respect (including for consent and privacy), and where acting responsibly was valued. Young men talked about enjoyment and fun as an important aspect of positive relationships, a feature that was less present in women's interviews. Women emphasised respect as involving self-respect and expecting respect from a partner. **Conclusion.** By telling our own stories, in interviews with peers and supported by a co-design process with university researchers, young Aboriginal people offer a nuanced account of views about sex and relationships, challenging common stereotypes about young people as careless or risky and instead showcasing the importance they give to responsibility, care, consent and respect.

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